श्री अमर सिंह: सर, आप कानून क्यों नहीं बनाते। जो मिल मालिक पैसा नहीं दे रहा है उनके खिलाफ एक्शन क्यों नहीं लेते, इसका कानून बनाइए। ...(व्यवधान)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No further discussion on this. ...(*Interruptions*)... You have already put your question. ...(*Interruptions*)...

श्री शरद पवार: मैंने यह कहा कि कानून के इम्प्लीमेंटेशन की जिम्मेदारी राज्य सरकार की है।

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Sir, though the question pertains to the Uttar Pradesh sugarcane growers, get the hon. Minister, in his reply, has stated that the SMP is applicable to all the States and it is uniform for the whole country. Therefore, my question falls within the ambit of this question. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister is aware of the fact that in the State of kerala large areas of land, where sugarcane and paddy can be cultivated, is lying idle because of the fact that prices are not remunerative and also because of the fact that labour is very costly and the labour is not cooperative. Dies he also know that even paddy, which used to be grown widely, is not being harvested because mechanisation is not being allowed? If the hon. Minister is aware of these fact what action does he contemplate to take in order to ensure that sugarcane is grown in those areas where it can be grown, and also the problem of paddy is solved? Will the hon. Minister take some steps in this regard? If 'Yes', what steps is he going to take?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I can tell about sugarcane because the question is about sugarcane. So, I cannot reply about paddy. I have some knowledge. But, this question is restricted to sugarcane only. Kerala is not, essentially, a sugar-producing State. Very limited sugarcane has been produced there. That is why, problems like payment for surplus cane etc. which are there in U.P. or some other States don't exist in kerala at all.

MR CHAIRMAN: Q. No. 467. ...(*Interruptions*)...

DR. KARAN SINGH: Sir, I have a submission to make.

MR CHAIRMAN: Yes.

DR. KARAN SINGH: Sir, a question has been asked by the hon. Member. And, that hon. Member is present in the House. Is it open to the hon. Member not to put the question or is it essential that he should put the question? What is your ruling on this?

MR CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is not registering his presence in the House with regard to the procedure for asking the question. In that case, the Chair has no option but to assume that the hon. Member is not present in the House for the purpose of Question Hour.

*467[The questioner (Shri S.S. Ahluwalia) was absent. For answer *vide* page 27 *infra*.]

*468[The questioners (Shri Raj Mohinder Singh Majitha and Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi) were absent. For answer *vide* page 27 *infra*.]

Buffer stock for emergency situations

*469. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:††

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to form a strategic reserve of five million tonnes of foodgrains in addition to the buffer stock to meet emergency situations;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

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†† The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Shobhana Bhartia

(c) whether to maintain strategic reserves of foodgrains, adequate warehouses/godowns exist;

(d) if so, the capacity of such warehouses/godowns and whether new warehouses/godowns would be set up to maintain reserves of foodgrains; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Pending revision of buffer norms and in order to ensure food security in the country, Government has decided that a strategic reserve of 50 lakh tonnes of foodgrains would be maintained by Food Corporation of India (FCI).

The strategic reserve would be built up over a period of time starting from 2008-09.

(c) to (e) The maxium buffer norm for foodgrains as on 1st July is 269 lakh tonnes. As on 29.2.2008, the FCI has a total of 241.09 lakh tonnes of storage capacity. As on 29.2.2008, the Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) and State Warehousing Corporation (SWC) have a storage capacity of 97.74 and 186.28 lakh tonnes respectively. Therefore, capacity available with FCI, CWC, SWC and State agencies, is sufficient for storing the strategic reserve of foodgrains.

SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Sir, I would like to put this question to the hon. Minister. He says that the strategic reserve would be built up over a period of time starting from 2008-09. Could he tell the House by when this reserve would be built up? Is he talking about this fiscal year when we will have five million in surplus or is it an ongoing process?

Secondly, Sir, he says that there is an adequate storage capacity. But, Sir, it is a known fact that, varying from 15 per cent to 30 per cent, our foodgrain is lost post-harvest because of the poor quality of storage. It is not a question of having the capacity, but it is a question of having the proper capacity. It should not go waste where in transportation or in gunny bags that store foodgrains, there are many leakages that cost us between 15-30 per cent. Does'nt the Government have any Official estimate as to how much is lost because of inadequate storage facilities, which are not up to the mark?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: As far as the storage capacity is concerned, it is not a problem for the FCI. Whatever storage capacity is available with FCI, we are using that. Plus, we are using the Central Warehousing Corporation's storage capacity. We are also using the State Warehousing Corporation's storage capacity. By and large, whatever capacity is available in the country, out of that, we are using near about 50-55 per cent. Rest of the capacity is available even today.

Regarding the question of its strategic reserve, it is not possible to implement that decision within one year. But our effort will be to build up the stock in the course of the next 2-3 years. This will be over and above the buffer stock and that will be kept as reserve. I think, we will be able to start, probably, building the stock from this year only. It may not be complete, but, at least, we will be able to start the process. One of the main reasons is that this year, we are getting a very good response from the farming community about our procurement. For instance, I am really happy to tell the House that till 24th April, that is, yesterday, the total wheat arrival in the market was 110 lakh tonnes. Out of that, we could procure 104 lakh tonnes, that is, 94 per cent. We have procured 36 lakh tonnes more as compared to last year, the same day. With regard to major States like Punjab and Haryana, this is the situation. Whatever is the daily arrival in Punjab, out of that, we procured about 99.2 per cent and whatever is the daily arrival in Haryana, we procured 99.9 per cent. So, there is a tremendous cooperation and support from, particularly, these two States. I am confident that the other States will also take inspiration from that. If this situation continues, probably, we will be able to build up a strategic reserve from this year only.

SHRI RAASHID ALVI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, some hon. Members are keeping fingers on their lips. I think they are suffering from some physical problem.

MR CHAIRMAN: This is not the subject under discussion at the moment.

SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Sir, before the second suplementary, would you care to look at the wastage because of inadequate storage capaicty of godowns? As you mentioned, Sir, there is enough capacity. But I am talking about the huge wastages, about 15-20 per cent, because of the inefficiency of storage capacity and also the quality of the storage. So, I would like to request the hon. Minister to please look into that. Sir, my second supplementary is, though you have had a very good procurement and the third advance estimates have also shown a very good increase, but, Sir, it is also a known fact that the last few years have seen indifferent to moderate production. Under such circumstances, Sir, are you concerned about crop diversification and is that impacting your production going forward? Are your looking at the ways and means to try and correct that? Also, is this the appropriate time for you to boost foodgrains production for bio-fuel? Does the Government think that for the time being it needs to again intervene in that to make sure that the basic food production does not suffer due to production for bio-fuel?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, we have not taken up any programme to expand the area to produce bio-fuel; that is why, it will not create any impact on food grains production. it is true that there is a diversion of foodgrains area to some other commercial crops, but, ultimately, the farmer also thinks what is more advantageous to him and then he takes the decision. The solution for this is to give proper price for wheat and rice. The Government of India has given the price for the last two, three years, and that is why I think, we will be able to achieve more than what we expected in the total foodgrains production. The way we are getting response for procurement itself is an indication that there is more production and that is why, stock is coming to the market. As for the issue of post-harvesting losses, yes, it is true that in our country, post-harvesting losses is a serious issue. This is not only or foodgrains, it is also about the vegetables, milk and all horticultural items, and farmer is losing a substantial money because of that. That is why, number of programmes have been taken up to improve the situation whereby we will be able to stop the post-harvesting losses.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Sir, it is, actually, the same question that the hon. Member has asked; I want to ask it in a more pointed way. We are expecting the advance estimates for food production for 2007-08. There is a record bumper crop of foodgrains production, especially, of wheat and rice which is nearly 237 million tons. The issue, really, is, especially in view of the price situation and the decision which may be taken to maintain the buffer stock, the quality of storage in the FCI godowns and of the other godowns does leave a lot to be desired. The hon. Member has already mentioned about it. The other thing is transport. But, specifically, because of the inadequate storage capacity of godowns, more than 10 per cent is lost. The rice and the wheat get spoilt because of the poor quality of storage and the lack of maintenance of godowns. Will the hon. Minister tell the House what steps are being taken to maintain the quality of foodgrains that is stored in these godowns?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: The main problem which was being faced by us is this. There are two types of godowns. One is, covered godowns and the other is, open godowns. When there is too much production and when the capacity of covered godowns is not there, on a number of occasions, we have also used non-covered godowns. But, today, that is not the situation. If you look at the information about the capacity of the FCI godowns, the Central Warehousing Corporation godowns and the State Warehousing Corporation godowns, you will find that we have enough covered godowns' capacity; that is why, there is a substantial improvment whereby we could stop the total losses.I do not make a statement that we have been hundred per cent successful in stopping the losses. Still there is a problem of losses. But we will definitely look at this issue more seriously.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, it is very good to hear that we have the capacity to store our strategic reserves and buffer. But the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices has estimated that as of 1st of October, 2003, the stocks that will be there with us in the country are perilously closer, and, in case of wheat, it will be lower than the buffer norm. The CACP says that for rice, what we will have in the buffer on the 1st of October is 5.49 million tonnes, while the norms suggests 5.2 million tonnes. For wheat, it says that it will be around 10 million tonnes while the buffer norms itself says

that we should have a minimum of 11 Now, the Minister has said — which is good—that there has been a 36 per cent increase in the procurement this year But if that is the case, we want to know from the Minister whether we will cross the minimum norms that are there for our buffer for this year This is part (a) of my supplementary Part (b) of my supplementary is whether the strategic reserve will be built up, and in case the procurement has been good, why are you not restoring the supplies, what you have cut, to the States? And, I am saying this particularly, Sir, for the sake of Kerala which is a glaring example About 1,13000 tonne was going to Kerala, but it has now been reduced to 17,000 tonne, a reducation of nearly 90 per cent Since the situation is improving, will the Minister give this assurance that these cuts will be restored to all the States wherever the cuts have been made and whether they will be restored to the earlier levels?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR Firstly, the procurement started practically ten days back We have not even reached the target For instance, in wheat the target production that we had fixed, we have not achieved that target yet So, unless and until we complete the target, it will be difficult I am confident that we will be able to improve our position with regard to shortage and procurement, and then probably, we will be able to give a second thougth also about the allocation

But the issue was raised about Kerala I have made the position absolutely clear in the House Whatever allocation that we have given to every State for AAY and BPL is 100 per cent restored There is no change in that, including, Kerala The issue is about the APL With regard to Above Poverty Line category, we have not taken the entire responsibility upon us That is not possible also That is why we have adopted some criterion and the criterion is based on what was the total allocation for the last two-three years and what was the actual off-take So, the average of off-take has been influenced and implemented throughout India So, that is also applicable

SHRI A VIJAYARAGHAVAN There is a difference between Kerala *(Interruptions)*

MR CHAIRMAN Please, please *(Interruptions)* Let the hon Minister finish *(Interruptions)*

SHRI A VIJAYARAGHAVAN There is a commitment *(Interruptions)*

MR CHAIRMAN Please don't confuse the two *(Interruptions)*

SHRI A VIJAYARAGHAVAN He is equating Kerala with *(Interruptions)*

MR CHAIRMAN No, no *(Interruptions)* Mr Vijayaraghavan, a question was asked *(Interruptions)* Let the answer be completed *(Interruptions)*

SHRI A VIJAYARAGHAVAN Sir, he is equating Kerala *(Interruptions)* That is the problem *(Interruptions)*

SHRI K CHANDRAN PILLAI Sir, kerala cannot be compared with other State *(Interruptions)*

MR CHAIRMAN Your colleague has asked a question Let the answer be completed *(Interruptions)*

SHRI A VIJAYARAGHAVAN Let the Minister reply that part also *(Interruptions)* Let the Ministry reply that part also *(Interruptions)*

MR CHAIRMAN Please don't interrupt *(Interruptions)*

SHRI A VAJAYARAGHAVAN It is very import *(Interruptions)* Kerala is a deficient State *(Interruptions)* he is equating it with other State *(Interruptions)*

MR CHAIRMAN No, no *(Interruptions)* Please, please *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Allow me to complete. ...*(Interruptions)*... Allow me to complete. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let the answer be completed. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Allow him to complete. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, I have to make one position clear that there are many States where there is a problem where they have not been in a position to fulfil their responsibility with regard to the APL category and that is why some of the States have taken their own decision. For instance, take States like Madhya Pradesh. The Madhya Prdesh Government has taken a decision to pay hundred rupees more, and they are procuring for themselves. The Chhattisgarh Government is also procuring for themselves over and above the Central Government's requirement and making it available to the people. Sir, States like Andhra Pradesh have introduced some scheme. So, for that scheme, it is not possible for the Government of India to supply them. So, they themselves are also paying more price and procuring it. Then, States like Maharashtra are also procuring from some other States and are trying to fulfil their requirement whether it is with regard to pulses or oilseeds. So, my earnest request to the State Government of Kerala is, as those States, which are really facing serious problem for APL category, are providing some money for purchasing and fulfilling their requirement, Kerala should also follow it. I had a long discussion with the hon. Chief Minister of Kerala. I got a communication from the Government of Kerala that it is different for the Kerala Government to acquire or procure it from other States, particularly, Andhra Pradesh. Three days back, the hon. Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and the Civil Supplies Minister of Andhra Pradesh were with me. I mentioned this to them and both of them have assured me that the Andhra Pradesh Government is ready to earmark three districts' production to meet the additional requirement of Kerala; they are ready to give it. Now, the only question is to make arrangements for procurement there, to check the entire stock and provide the additional quantity. The Government of India is ready to cooperate and resolve these issues and I have no hesitation in saying that these will be resolved soon.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Thank you, Sir. ...*(Interruptions)* You must permit me, Sir. *(Interruptions)*

MR CHAIRMAN: Please. *(Interruptions)* There are other supplementaries. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the hon. Minister please answer whether... *(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT; Sir, this is *(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, let me ask him a question. He is prepared to answer and that is why I am asking him. Please do not penalise Kerala because it has a good and efficient public distribution system. *(Interruptions)* Secondly, Sir, in the case of Andhra there is a...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, Mr. Yechury *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, in the case of Andhra Pradesh, I am happy that you have restored 30 per cent of the cut. If you can do it for Andhra, why don't you do it for Kerala? Please don't have any political *(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please. You can't ask a supplmentary on a supplementary. Please do not disturb.*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, the Minister is prepared to answer *(Interruptions)* Sir, the Minister is prepared to answer. *(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: The point, Sir, is... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, the Minister is prepared to answer *(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is not fair. *(Interruptions)* Give your colleague a chance to ask a supplementary question.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, the Minister is prepared to answer *(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, this is really unfair. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Sir, this is... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SITARAM YECHUARY: Sir, I am happy that Andhra Pradesh has got a very good... *(Interruptions)* Sir, the Minister is prepared to answer. He is prepared to answer. *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Yechury, please. *(Interruptions)* Please resume your place. *(Interruptions)* Please resume your place. *(Interruptions)* Please go ahead, Sir. *(Interruptions)* आप बैठ जाइए। Please *(Interruptions)* You cannot ask a question unless it is your turn.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Whatever policy we are implementing in Andhra, the same is applicable to them also. The Andhra Government, the Tamil Nadu Govoernment or any other State Government have been lifting whatever allocation we were making to them. Those States were not lifting and that is why their quota was cut. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Now, that is...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please do not interrupt. *(Interruptions)* Please do not interrupt.

SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: The Government cannot... *(Interruptions)* You cannot ignore...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Why don't you say that you have to restore *(Interruptions)* Why don't you say that... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Why can't you ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Why not for Kerala? *(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nobody is listening to anyone. What is the point of this ruckus? *(Interruptions)*

SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: We want an assurance that it will be restored in the case of Kerala. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are not giving a chance to the Minister to respond to your query. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI TAPAN KUAMR SEN: Sir, we only want an assurance that the supply would be restored. *(Interruptions)* We want an assurance... *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Unless you give him a chance to speak, he cannot respond. *(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: How can he say this about Kerala? *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please. There is a another question to be asked on this. *(Interruptions)* Please resume your places. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, Andhra is a surplus State while Kerala is a deficit State. How can he compare the two States? *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. Mr. Yechury, you have asked a qeustion. Please listen to the reply. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: What kind of a reply... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: He has raised a specific question. *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please. ...*(Interruptions)* There is no compulsion on assurances. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: The question... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Sir, the answer is not satisfactory. *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. *(Interruptions)* Please resume your places. *(Interruptions)* I would request the hon. Members to resume their places. *(Interruptions)* This Minister has the floor. Please let him respond. ...*(Interruptions)*

डॉ॰ प्रभा ठाकुर: सभापति महोदय, मुझे भी माननीय कृषि मंत्री जी से प्रश्न पूछना है ...(व्यवधान) उसे लेने के लिए मध्य प्रदेश में ...(व्यवधान)

श्री सभापति: आप बैठ जाइए।

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: As I had said, there are no different yardsticks for Kerala and Andhra. It is true that Andhra has a surplus, but whatever allocation was given to Andhra, they have lifted it in the last two-three years. The same percentage was not lifted by Kerala and that is why a uniform policy has been... *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, the earlier Government... *(Interruptions)* We cannot accept this. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: What is this, Sir? *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please. Let the answer be completed. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, we want an assurance from the Government. This is not an assurance. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, we are walking out in protest to this answer of the Minister. *(Interruptions)*

[At this stage some hon. Members left the Chamber]

SHRI AMAR SINGH: Sir, this is how the House is being run. All of us are agitated over various issues. Today they are agitated; yesterday we were agitated. This is what I was trying to say. There must be... *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Amar Singhji, the Minister is replying to a question. Please listen to it.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: As I said, Kerala is a State that is producing commercial crops and that is why one has to have a slightly different approach towards the State of Kerala. We have said that we are ready to provide the additional quantity, if required, after looking into our kitty. I have also to say one thing because there is unnecessary misunderstanding. In certain areas of Kerala like Kupaner where mature paddy is ready for the last 15 days, but the farmers are complaining that they are not getting labour and machineries, and harvesters are not allowed to enter in that area and that is why, probably, there will be a substantial loss to farmers. So, they should take that responsibility also and we will take our responsibility.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.